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COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Legal information services

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The present report provides a brief account of the legal information services provided by the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations. It identifies the main sources of legal information that are of importance to potential foreign investors and officials in host countries and considers the various legal information needs that all parties interested in foreign investment projects may have from time to time. In recognition of such needs, the Centre has, in recent years, developed a fairly extensive collection of legal material and has taken steps to disseminate relevant information when so requested by individual developing countries. The main forms of legal information currently held by the Centre include texts of national laws and regulations on foreign direct investment, contracts completed between Governments and transnational corporations on a wide range of issues and analytical studies on various investment matters. While questions of confidentiality and the problem of limited resources circumscribe some aspects of the Centre's work in disseminating legal information to developing countries, efforts continue to be made to improve the quality of the Centre's contribution in this important field.

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INTRODUCTION

1. At its sixteenth session, the Commission on Transnational Corporations requested that the Secretary-General submit to it at its seventeenth session a report on the experience gained in the development of the comprehensive information system, taking into account the views by delegations at its sixteenth session. The present report dealing with legal information services provided under the Centre's comprehensive information system has been prepared in response to that request.

I. THE NEED FOR LEGAL INFORMATION SERVICES

2. An essential ingredient in sound decision-making is access to appropriate, adequate and timely information. In negotiations between transnational corporations and host countries, access to legal information is a crucial factor for both parties. On the one hand, for the transnational corporation that is a potential investor there will be a need to gather as much information as is available on the general policies of the host country as well as on the legal and regulatory framework that would govern the proposed investment. On the other, the host Government would be well-advised to identify those elements of the proposed arrangement that are likely to be considered absolutely essential by the transnational corporation as well as those elements that the Government should stress to obtain the best terms for itself. A critical requirement for this type of analysis would be adequate information about the transnational corporation's operations in its home country as well as in other host countries and the types of legal arrangements governing those operations.

3. Against this background, it needs to be emphasized that, even with respect to individual investment projects, the scope of what constitutes "legal information" should not be narrowly construed. In essence, "legal information" constitutes all forms of information that relate to the laws and regulations of a particular State; and, as such, it embraces not only the legal norms that apply directly to a given project, but also the institutional aspects of the prevailing legal regime, together with its procedure and other conventions.

4. With respect to all foreign investment projects, therefore, potential investors and their government counterparts often need, at the very least, to peruse the following legal sources: the foreign investment law of the country concerned, its exchange control and taxation regimes, relevant property, company and contract laws (including, where applicable, joint venture rules and regulations), its administrative rules and procedures and its regulations pertaining to foreign trade and payments. In addition, in the case of natural resource projects, there will almost invariably be a complex structure of mining and petroleum laws requiring scrupulous attention; and, increasingly, advisers also need to examine bilateral and multilateral international arrangements that touch on and concern foreign investment issues.

5. It should also be noted that the process of acquiring legal information cannot be effectively undertaken without some knowledge of the interplay between various

sources of the law. In most jurisdictions, the constitution may provide guidance on the hierarchy of legal sources, so that where two sets of laws appear to be contradictory there will be an accepted method for identifying the rules that should prevail. In a similar fashion, the constitution may also contain a number of fundamental principles that are to be used in assessing the validity of all laws within a given country; in their investment relations, therefore, foreign entrepreneurs and their government counterparts need to be fully familiar with the constitution of the host country concerned.

6. It is a truism that as national economies increase in sophistication, they give rise to more complex and intricate legal rules and regulations. In the present context, this means that advisers should remain mindful that legal information on foreign investment is hardly ever static. In the case of common law jurisdictions, for example, relevant legislation and general principles are constantly being interpreted by domestic courts; consequently, the stock of legal rules on investment issues is polished and replenished on a regular basis. Nor is this process confined to municipal courts for, given the preference of foreign investors for the settlement of disputes by international arbitration, there is a long-standing and substantial tradition of judicial lawmaking on foreign investment issues at the international level. In practical terms, this suggests that advisers from both Governments and the private sector need to garner information regularly on the latest judicial trends and practices, both nationally and internationally, if they wish to provide comprehensive technical guidance.

7. Bearing these considerations in mind, the Centre therefore eschews the position that legal information can readily be obtained from single sources that purport to cover the whole field of foreign investment. For the effective negotiation of investment agreements and related arrangements, it is in the interest of all parties not only to be au fait with respect to the details to be included in the particular contract concerned but also to familiarize themselves with the whole range of ancillary sources of legal information that have direct as well as indirect bearing on investment in particular host countries.

8. While access to information is a crucial factor for both parties involved in a negotiation, evidence shows that in negotiations between developing countries and transnational corporations there is often an imbalance in favour of transnational corporations.

9. In evaluating potential investments in developing countries, transnational corporations have access to a wide range of information generated by home-government agencies, trade associations, commercial publishers, private consultancy corporations and business and academic journals. For a given country, such information includes reports on the investment climate, risk assessments and industry and trade reports. Large corporations also possess highly sophisticated in-house information systems that provide on-the-spot accessibility to a wide variety of legal information.

10. Developing countries, on the other hand, have little access to the same kind of information. More particularly, they frequently lack all the legal information necessary for the proper evaluation of contractual arrangements. Many developing countries are not aware of the international sources of information and data,

whether those sources are international institutions or are found in the public and private sectors of other countries. On the other hand, for many countries that may be aware of such sources, the cost of collecting information providing the required degree of detail is often prohibitive. The problem is further compounded in so far as systematic exchange of information between developing countries on policies and contractual arrangements is not common, even when that information may not be of a confidential nature.

11. It has therefore required considerable international effort, which is likely to remain essential for some time, to supplement national capabilities for collection and utilization of the legal information necessary to enable developing countries both to negotiate equitable arrangements with transnational corporations and to formulate policy and legislation in full knowledge and appreciation of the experience of other countries in similar situations. The United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations continues to play a role in this effort.

12. Of course, the Centre's work in this area is only part of the overall effort by the United Nations to satisfy at least some of the information needs of its States Members. In keeping with its mandate, the Centre naturally concentrates on the acquisition and dissemination of information on transnational corporations and on matters pertaining to foreign direct investment. As has already been emphasized, however, legal information relevant even to discrete investment projects should not be viewed in narrow terms; consequently, the Centre provides information on a variety of matters that, while not related solely to transnational investment, fall within this sphere of activity. The Centre's approach suggests that, with regard to matters such as labour and environmental laws and regulations, there may be some degree of overlap between the collections held by the Centre and those belonging to other agencies, for example, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). To a certain extent this is inevitable since it would be both artificially restrictive and rather cumbersome for each agency to delineate sharply with respect to its specific concerns. At the same time, however, because it is generally agreed that duplication of effort within the United Nations system should be kept to a minimum, the Centre is sensitive to the need to coordinate its work with other agencies and remains mindful of the fact that foreign investment matters must constitute the focal point of its legal information system.

II. THE CENTRE'S LEGAL INFORMATION SERVICES

13. The establishment of the Centre's comprehensive information system was intended, inter alia, to strengthen the negotiating capacity of host countries, particularly developing countries, in their transactions with transnational corporations. The kind of information required of the Centre is obviously determined by the issues in any particular field with which Governments are or need to be concerned. However, past experience indicates that a sizeable proportion of that information will be legal information. This is reflected in the Centre's technical assistance activities, a large number of which involve the provision of legal advice in the formulation, drafting and revising of legislation or regulations concerning transnational corporations and in the negotiation or

renegotiation of various contractual arrangements entered into with transnational corporations.

14. Legal information is provided by the Centre to Member States in various forms: (a) documentation from the Centre's extensive collection of legal material related to foreign investment and transnational corporations, including publications, investment-related legislation and model contracts of various countries, as well as contracts already entered into between transnational corporations and certain Member States; (b) and information basically of a research and evaluative nature, involving the analysis of various laws, regulations, contracts and agreements.

15. The volume of legal information requested of and provided by the Centre in turn reflects the growing importance of three major components of the Centre's comprehensive information system. These are the laws and regulations component, the contracts and agreements component and analytical studies.

A. The laws and regulations component of the information system

16. The laws and regulations component of the Centre's information system comprises three main elements:

(a) A publication, which the Centre continues to update, describing national and regional legislation and regulations enacted for the purpose of regulating the operational activities of transnational corporations. Volume VIII of the publication, entitled National Legislation and Regulations Relating to Transnational Corporations, will be issued this year;

(b) A list, which the Centre is continuing to develop, of legislation related to foreign direct investment. The list will be ready for publication this year as part of the directory on foreign direct investment and transnational corporations;

(c) A collection, which the Centre continues to expand, of copies of laws and regulations related to the activities of transnational corporations.

17. The laws and regulations component of the information system has the following main purposes:

(a) To facilitate the Centre's systematic collection of information related to the national and international legal framework within which transnational corporations operate. The collection enables the Centre to develop a current, comprehensive and comparative database of national laws, regulations and policies affecting transnational corporations as well as of regional and international arrangements affecting the operations of transnational corporations;

(b) To facilitate the Centre's advisory services and technical assistance to developing host countries that wish to institute key changes in their national legislation concerning foreign investment and operations of transnational corporations. By continuously updating its collection of laws and regulations, the

Centre is able to respond to specific requests promptly and with detailed information on the legal mechanisms related to activities of transnational corporations adopted by other countries;

(c) To provide information on this subject to users besides the Centre and Governments, including transnational corporations, educational and research organizations, public interest groups and other international organizations.

18. It should be noted that a number of constraints impose limitations upon the development of this component of the Centre's information system. These constraints and limitations arise from essentially two sources: the vastness and complexity of the subject-matter; and time, staffing and budget limitations on the resources of the Centre.

19. There is obvious difficulty in deciding, in fact, which laws and legal issues have significance for host country regulation of transnational corporations. Since these laws and their administration often do not apply only to transnational corporations, a legal expert familiar with the host country's legal system is needed to analyse them properly. In fact, as was implicit in our earlier comments on the relevant sources of legal information, nearly all the national laws of a given country may have some bearing on the operations of transnational corporations.

20. However, by limiting the scope of legal issues to be included in the system, it is possible to devote the proper degree of analysis to the national laws, regulations, decrees and policies, as well as to the treaties and international agreements, that relate to the particular legal issues being studied.

21. For example, in developing a list of legislation related to foreign direct investment, the Centre has limited itself to the following:

(a) Laws and regulations specifically dealing with foreign direct investment in any sector or industry;

(b) Company law, including accounting and reporting regulations;

(c) Taxation law;

(d) Transfer of technology law;

(e) Industrial/intellectual property law;

(f) Labour relations and employment law;

(g) Relevant aspects of environmental law.

22. A related problem lies in the availability of information. The relevant laws and regulations may be scattered throughout the host country's entire legal system. Furthermore, although many countries publish official gazettes that report changes in their legal regime, it is often quite difficult to obtain reports of decrees and policies in a regular and timely fashion, especially in those

developing nations where information-processing systems are not highly developed. In any event, a good deal of time and staffing are required for monitoring revisions of the information.

23. Although its initial collection of laws and regulations concentrated on the legal framework of host countries, the Centre is now giving serious consideration to expanding its collection of laws, regulations and policies of home-country Governments. Home-country regulation of transnational corporations may have an impact on corrupt practices, taxation, capital flows, disclosure of information, restrictive business practices and other issues and may thereby give rise to conflicts with the legal regimes of host countries.

B. The contracts component of the information system

24. The Centre continues to expand its collection of contracts and agreements between transnational corporations and host entities. The contracts collection is a major tool of the Centre in its provision of advisory and information services. Among the most important purposes, objectives and uses of the contracts component of the information system are the following:

(a) To enable host country negotiators to strengthen their position vis-à-vis transnational corporations by providing them with extensive detailed information about different classes of contracts and specific contractual provisions between transnational corporations and host countries;

(b) To provide a database for research related to agreements between transnational corporations and host countries;

(c) To provide information to other users, including transnational corporations and to promote a better understanding of the development and contracting policies of host countries.

25. The Centre has noted in previous documents that business confidentiality is a major obstacle to the development of a comprehensive information system for contracts between transnational corporations and host country entities. The following reasons are frequently given to explain why transnational corporations may desire to maintain the secrecy of their contracts:

(a) Contracts may contain proprietary information related, for example, to technology;

(b) Access to contracts may aid competitors;

(c) A comparison of contracts may reveal different terms for different parties, especially when specific provisions are viewed in isolation.

26. A few of the same reasons explain why host countries are sometimes also unwilling to make transnational contracts available for examination and dissemination. Reasons for a host country's desire to maintain the confidentiality of its contracts and agreements include the following:

(a) The host country may wish to maintain or develop a competitive advantage over neighboring States or other States with which it is often competing for the limited financial, technological and related resources needed to design and implement development projects;

(b) Contracts may relate to national security matters;

(c) The contents of a contract may reveal more about a country's economic strengths and weaknesses than the Government would like to reveal either to the public or to transnational corporations with which it may later find itself negotiating;

(d) The contracts and agreements may not be entirely consistent with national investment legislation or policy.

27. The constraints placed upon Governments in making contracts available sometimes extend beyond the question of confidentiality. In some countries, national legislation and regulations prohibit the disclosure of contracts entered into by the Government. It should be noted, however, that not all Governments have adopted an identical or even similar approach to the availability of those contracts into which they enter. In many countries it is standard practice not to classify as confidential contracts between the Government and private parties. In such countries, contracts are subject to approval by the appropriate branch of the Government, the legislature, for example, or the executive branch, and, as part of this approval process, the contract is published in the official gazette of the country concerned.

28. Thus, restrictions on the availability of contracts - imposed either formally, by the dictates of national legislation and regulations, or informally, through the desire for governmental or business confidentiality - impose, in turn, a limitation on the contracts component of the information system of the Centre. However, despite the apparent difficulties created by such constraints, the Centre has managed to continue expanding its very sizeable collection of contracts, largely because the users of the Centre's information system, who happen to be also the suppliers of a large number of contracts, have come to recognize that the Centre, when supplying legal information is always sensitive to the matter of confidentiality.

29. Legal materials from the Centre's collection of contracts can be supplied to user Governments in three different forms:

(a) The complete text of a contract that is no longer in force or has been published by the parties thereto or is otherwise in the public domain;

(b) The text of a sanitized contract, that is, a text with the names of all parties to the contract removed and sometimes with other omissions;

(c) The abstract of a contract, that is, a brief description of its essential features, in the not unlikely event that the parties to that contract should object to publicizing its full text, whether sanitized or not.

30. It must be emphasized that simply providing a host country negotiator with several clauses that were employed in other contracts or with a profile of another contract will have a limited, sometimes a negative, effect upon the negotiating ability of that host country negotiator, since the economic, financial and legal circumstances under which negotiations are conducted vary widely from investment to investment. The Centre also takes the view that individual contracts can be misconstrued when not viewed in their overall economic context; for this reason, the provision of legal information is usually undertaken as part of an overall advisory project.

C. Analytical studies

31. Finally, analytical studies constitute a vital part of the Centre's legal information resources. Over the years, the Centre's studies on the activities of transnational corporations and on the various aspects of their relations with Governments have included analyses of policy and legal issues as well as of contractual practice. There have also been a large number of specialized studies of prevailing practices in particular industries, countries or samples of countries, and regions, including analyses of policy, legal and contractual issues.

32. The most prominent among these studies is the series of global surveys entitled Transnational Corporations in World Development, which has always included a major legal component. More specialized studies have covered such subjects as joint ventures, alternative forms of mining and petroleum development, licensing agreements, engineering and technical consultancy agreements, bilateral treaties, the code of conduct and international law issues, as well as a large variety of other topics. The Centre's Current Studies and Advisory Studies series have also covered a wide range of specialized subjects of an economic, industrial and legal nature. A list of some of the Centre's studies dealing with subjects of a legal nature is contained in the annex to this report.

33. The Centre continues to add to this body of legal information, which not only has proved useful to Governments for policy-making, legislative and negotiating purposes, but also has become a universally recognized source of scholarship on transnational corporations.

III. THE CENTRE'S WORK: A BRIEF ASSESSMENT

34. In keeping with the conclusions specified in an evaluation of the work of the Centre (E/AC.51/98/Add.1) prepared in 1979, emphasis has been placed on collecting laws, regulations and contracts on transnational activity that may be useful to Governments and their agencies. From all indications, this conforms with the needs and requests of individual countries. In the absence of a comprehensive impact study however, it is difficult to reach definitive conclusions on the overall efficacy of the Centre's programme in the area of legal information. Nevertheless, all the available evidence strongly suggests that developing countries, as a group, presently attach considerable importance to this aspect of the Centre's work. To begin with, it is evident that Member States and other parties have been using the

legal information services of the Centre with increasing frequency. In 1990, for instance, requests for information on laws, regulations and agreements totalled nearly 350, up from 300 in 1989; of these, requests for information on laws and regulations predominated in 1990, with approximately two thirds of the inquiries received falling into this category. While the majority of requests come directly from government departments, other entities such as research institutions, universities and non-governmental organizations also make frequent use of the Centre's information base. Overall, therefore, the actual number of requests received, the fact that this number has steadily increased and the diversity of the recipients of the Centre's assistance in this area underline the usefulness of the service that the Centre has been providing.

35. In assessing the efficacy of the Centre's work, it should also be noted that, as a matter of policy, the Centre seeks to adhere essentially to the terms of the request submitted by Governments or other agencies. The rationale for this policy lies in the view that the recipient's own perception of its information needs should be paramount. In practical terms, however, this means that the Centre's overall usefulness is partly determined by the way in which requesters of information choose to rely on the Centre. None the less, there remains ample scope for the view that the Centre's efficacy is not circumscribed by this approach. That view is borne out by brief reference to the Centre's practice in actual cases.

36. Just prior to negotiating a petroleum exploration contract with certain transnational corporations, the Government of Argentina requested the Centre to provide it with alternative clauses in petroleum contracts related to the applicable law, the settlement of disputes and the responsibility for modification, nullification and termination of contracts. The Government then made its own evaluation of the information provided and, on that basis, determined the formulation that would be most appropriate for its own circumstances. In much the same manner, the Government of Brazil, upon receiving information from the Centre on the mining taxation legislation of several mineral-exporting countries, was able to evaluate its own legislation in the light of prevailing international practices. In yet another case, information provided by the Centre at a seminar on joint ventures organized in Moscow in 1989 led to revisions of Soviet regulations on joint ventures. In all such cases, it may well be that information transmitted by the Centre is used at an initial stage in the process of policy formulation, but the information is none the less an integral part of that process.

37. In other instances, the legal information requests submitted by Governments are couched in terms that envisage that advisory assistance will be provided along with the information sought. In these instances, the Centre's work will include an analytical component and, where appropriate, a recommendation of the best options for the Government to pursue. For example, in the course of 1990, the Centre assisted the Government of Fiji in assessing competing bids for a proposed copper project in that country. An important part of the assessment included compilation of information on the transnational corporations involved and on the laws and regulations prevailing in the home States of these corporations. The Centre was therefore able to provide the Government with a wide-ranging analysis; and, on the basis of responses from the relevant department, the information and analysis provided were revealed to be influential components in the Government's decision-making process.

38. Still another index of the usefulness of the Centre's information service may be distilled from the practice of Governments in this area. In a number of cases, in particular, the provision of legal information by the Centre has resulted in requests for advisory services. This class of cases is analytically distinct from those in which the initial request for information is coupled with an advisory component, for in these cases the request for advisory assistance follows the request for information. For example, a request by Mongolia for legal materials related to petroleum exploration has resulted in an ongoing advisory project through which the Centre is providing the Government with direct assistance during its actual negotiations with transnational corporations. Similarly, the Government of Cameroon, having originally requested information on mining legislation from various countries, has now sought the assistance of the Centre in drafting a new mining code. It is fair to assume that such follow-up activities have been prompted not only by the Centre's rapid response to the initial request for legal information, but also by its comprehensive approach to the initial inquiry.

39. Finally, in some cases the provision of legal information is integrally connected with advisory projects undertaken by the Centre. For instance, during negotiations involving advisers from the Centre in such countries as Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone and Uganda, government negotiators sought information on legal prescriptions and approaches taken in different countries with regard to particular points. Likewise, in the course of providing assistance to the Government of Namibia in the drafting of a comprehensive foreign investment code, the Centre was asked to provide detailed information on various forms of dispute settlement and different models of arbitral rules and procedures. Whenever possible, the Centre is willing to comply with requests for both information and advisory assistance; these components of the Centre's technical assistance programme are of equal importance and will continue to be given the attention they deserve.

IV. IMPROVING THE CENTRE'S LEGAL INFORMATION SERVICES

A. Creating computer-based indexes of the contracts collection

40. The Centre has been requested on a number of occasions to provide information about current contractual terms and conditions in a given sector. The Centre's large contracts collection is an invaluable source of information about current terms and conditions in different sectors. However, the material is to some degree underutilized because the needed information is to a certain extent inaccessible. In order to make use of these contracts as a tool in negotiation, one needs to know where particular provisions in the contracts are to be found.

41. There is a need, therefore, for a computer-based comprehensive index, comprising references to contracts in the Centre's collection, to particular provisions in those contracts, to bibliographical material and, when they are accessible and relevant, to arbitration and other case law. As a start, the Centre is creating such a computer-based index for the collection of petroleum agreements, which is the largest collection of agreements on a sector basis that the Centre possesses.

42. The Centre's computer-based index for petroleum contracts starts with a very general classification of the material into certain broad categories, for example, name of the parties - country and company; type of arrangement, such as concession or production sharing; and geographical region. The subject-matter of petroleum contracts is then broken down into particular topics, for example, provisions relating to work programmes, force majeure and arbitration, which are usually dealt with in separate articles.

43. Once the index was designed, the next step was to examine the Centre's collection agreement by agreement in the context of the various categories established and to assign references to those categories. The results were then entered in a computer database. Thus, if a Government requests information on a particular type of provision, the Centre can promptly refer to hundreds of contracts simply by retrieving information stored under the relevant category from the computer database.

44. This is of course an ongoing project since the contract material is being continuously updated. The Centre also intends to expand this project to cover all other types of contracts in its collection.

B. Developing national legal information systems

45. Available information, however great the quantity, will be of little benefit to host countries unless they are in a position to make full use of it for those purposes for which has been obtained. It would appear that in many developing countries the administrative machinery is far too diffused, weak and inadequate either to obtain or fully utilize the required information. Consequently, the Centre now considers it crucial to complement its legal information services by assisting developing countries in developing their own national legal information systems.

46. A pilot project for a legal information database system for financial agreements within a West African country's Ministry of Finance provides an example of the assistance mentioned above. The project, whose aim is to assist the Government in its recording and retrieval of data related to the contractual provisions of financial agreements, is designed to develop institutional machinery for the evaluation, monitoring and drafting of financial agreements and to thus enhance the Government's negotiating capabilities with transnational corporations.

47. For this West African country, as for many other developing countries, the debt crisis has heightened awareness of the need for better information upon which to base debt management decisions. One important response to this need has been the development of several computer-based debt management systems. Traditionally, the term "debt management information systems" has referred to systems supporting accounting and statistical functions in the area of monitoring financial flows. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Bank, the Commonwealth Secretariat and some private institutions have developed computer-based debt management systems to record, process, manage and report on debt-related data. However, there is a need for technical assistance in the areas

of collecting, storing, and analysing financial agreements and of sharing this information and experience with developing countries. Database systems could be designed to concentrate solely on contractual arrangements in order to provide technical assistance in the negotiation of financial agreements.

48. In many developing countries, much of the information needed for the negotiation of financial agreements is either scattered and duplicated throughout the various files of different ministries and agencies or personally retained by various officials. It is generally not organized as a coherent information system that can permit easy access among a variety of users. In some cases, much of the information that would be highly pertinent, although it may be available in some of the ministries, never reaches the officials in charge of negotiations. Through a well-established database system, government officials can be trained to organize, store and retrieve data collected on financial arrangements.

49. The completion of the Centre's project should result in an organized collection of financial agreements stored within a computerized database system for easy retrieval. The database will provide the texts of original loan and rescheduling agreements covering both financial and legal elements.

50. The Centre's Information Services Branch will install the computer hardware and software systems. A mission team from the Centre will work with government officials in order to determine precise information needs, the data and input available and the legislation and agreements required as output, as well as staff capabilities.

V. CONCLUSIONS

51. The Centre has continued to respond to requests from Governments for legal information related to negotiations with transnational corporations. The Centre also facilitates, on a reciprocal and confidential basis, information-sharing among developing countries.

52. The Centre has, on a number of occasions, also been a source of information for transnational corporations on the legal and regulatory framework for foreign direct investment in developing countries. Educational and research organizations and other international organizations have also benefited from its collection of legal information.

53. The Centre has continued to respond to requests from government institutions for assistance in developing and refining national information systems on transnational corporations. Since developing countries are increasingly conscious of the need for computer-based databases for legal information, the Centre continues to assist those countries in the design, creation and operation of such information systems.

54. The increasing demand for the Centre's legal information services has necessitated various improvements and refinements of those services. Thus, the Centre continues to develop computer-based indexing and retrieval systems for the

various components of its legal information material. However, limitations on the Centre's staffing and budgetary resources have imposed certain restrictions on the range of legal information services that the Centre can provide.

Annex

SELECTED LIST OF UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATIONS CONCERNING LEGAL ISSUES RELATED TO TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS

1. Negotiating International Hotel Chain Management Agreements: A Primer for Hotel Owners in Developing Countries
2. The New Code Environment
3. Key concepts in International Investment Arrangements and Their Relevance to Negotiations on International Transactions in Services
4. License Agreements in Developing Countries: An Analysis of Key Provisions
5. Technology Acquisition under Alternative Arrangements with Transnational Corporations: Selected Industrial Case Studies in Thailand
6. Financial and Fiscal Aspects of Petroleum Exploitation
7. Arrangements Between Joint Venture Partners in Developing Countries
8. Natural Gas Clauses in Petroleum Arrangements
9. Analysis of Engineering and Technical Assistance Consultancy Contracts
10. Analysis of Equipment Leasing Contracts
11. Issues in Negotiating International Loan Agreements with Transnational Banks
12. Transnational Corporations and Contractual Relations in the World Uranium Industry: A Technical Paper
13. Features and Issues in Turnkey Contracts in Developing Countries: A Technical Paper
14. Main Features and Trends in Petroleum and Mining Agreements
15. Management Contracts in Developing Countries: An Analysis of Their Substantive Provisions
16. Alternative Arrangements for Petroleum Development
17. International Debt Restructuring: Substantive Issues and Techniques
18. International Income Taxation and Developing Countries
19. Bilateral Investment Treaties